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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9313
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2207
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5672
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9275
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6855
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4651
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2646
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000500

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/07/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: QUIET ON EVE OF 8/8/88 UPRISING
ANNIVERSARY

REF: A. RANGOON 390

[1](#)B. RANGOON 442

Classified By: P/E Chief Jennifer Harhigh for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Security Tight; No Major Events Planned

[1](#)1. (C) According to exile and Burma-based activists, noQ major events are planned to mark the 21st anniversary of the 8/8/88 popular uprising, due to feab of arrest. Regime authmrities have increased security since mid-July in anticipation of a verdict in the ongoing Aung San Suu Kyi trial and police are deployinc nes security barricadeq around town in advance of the anniversary. During a briefing for `iplomats and journalists on August 7, BurMa's Chief of Police and Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, MajGen. Khin Yi, confirmed that security is heightened. He said the reason relates to bomb threats connected to National League for Democracy (NLD) members. He proposed that the general public should not be concerned about the security but should be thankful for it.

"Risky, Dangerous Environment"
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[1](#)2. (C) 88 Generatimn Students (88GS) deader Toe Kyaw Hlaing told us August 1 that the current environment is too "risky and dangerous" for activists to commemorate the anniversary publicly. He had expected a small group of activists to present robes and food offerings to monks at Rangoon's Chauk Hta Gyi monastery, where the abbot permitted a similar commemoration of the anniversary in 2007. However, Toe Kyaw Hlaing informed us August 7 the group has decided to cancel its planned offering for unspecified reasons.

Leaflets Appear in Bago, New Party in the Works?

[1](#)3. (C) Several youth activists told us they are changing their tactics from large-scale protests to "hit-and-run" style campaigns. For example, dissidents are distributing leaflets and putting up posters in discreet locations in order to speak out against the regime while minimizing risk of arrest. Exile press reported and an activist contact

confirmed that leaflets commemorating 8/8/88 were strewn all over Bago, a city north of Rangoon.

¶4. (C) Another activist told an Embassy contact that disgruntled youth from the NLD, including a former student of the Embassy's American Center, plan to announce publicly the formation of a new political party, the National Democratic Alliance, on August 8. No details are available yet as to the membership; however the reported platform focuses on developing genuine democracy, federalism, and equal rights.

Warden Message

¶5. (U) The Embassy issued a warden message July 29 alerting Americans to the expected verdict in the Aung San Suu Kyi trial and the upcoming 8/8/88 anniversary and cautioning them to remain vigilant.

Comment

¶6. (C) With the most prominent 88 Generation leaders serving long prison sentences, others wary of arrest, and a verdict scheduled for August 11 in the ASSK trial, we expect 8/8/2009 will likely pass quietly, as it did last year. We have heard some rumors about a possible prisoner amnesty to be announced concurrently with the ASSK verdict, possibly to dampen international criticism of her expected conviction; but we have as yet no concrete information to confirm the

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Burma UN PermRep's pledge to the UNSC on July 13 that the regime will release prisoners.
DINGER